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A  
DISSERTATION  
UPON THE  
CHRONOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES  
IMPUTED TO THE  
MOSAIC HISTORY, &c.



PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

CHRONOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES



DISSERTATION

A  
DISSERTATION  
UPON THE  
CHRONOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES  
IMPUTED TO THE  
MOSAIC HISTORY,

From the BIRTH to the DEATH of

J A C O B.

By WILLIAM SKINNER, M. A.  
Vicar of *Bosbury* in *Herefordshire*.

H E R E F O R D:

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# DISSERTATION

CHRONOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

RELATIVE TO THE

## MOSSAIC HISTORY,

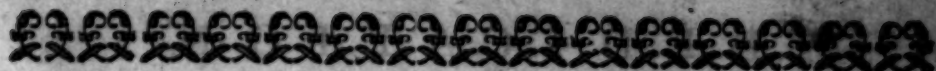
J. A. C. O. B.



By WILLIAM SKINNER, M.A.  
Vice-Chancellor of the University of London

Printed by G. BUCHAN, and sold by E. BALDWIN,  
at the British Museum, LONDON.





TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
LORD JAMES BEAUCLERK,  
LORD BISHOP OF  
HEREFORD.

MY LORD,

I beg YOUR LORDSHIP'S Permission to put this Dissertation under the same Patronage with it's Author.

It would seem indeed too trifling a Present to be offered to YOUR LORDSHIP, to whom I am so much obliged, if the Nature of the Subject did not entitle it to some Consideration, beyond what it may deserve on it's own Account. You will never think the meanest Attempt towards vindicating the Sacred Writings unworthy of Your Attention.

Nothing

iv DEDICATION.

Nothing can be more contrary to my Inclination, than to offend YOUR LORDSHIP with the Language usual upon these Occasions; but, for the Sake of the Pleasure it affords to Myself, I beg to be indulged in making this publick Acknowledgment of Your Favours.

I am, MY LORD, [with the utmost Respect and Gratitude,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

dutiful Son,

and most obliged

humble Servant,

W. SKINNER.

THE  
P R E F A C E.

*I*T cannot be thought that a Dissertation upon so dry a Subject as Chronology can be generally interesting; and even to the few, to whom an Attempt of this Kind may be an Object of Curiosity, I despair of being so intelligible as I could wish, unless they will previously look over the Book of Genesis, from the twenty fourth to the forty sixth Chapter inclusive, in Order to take in the Subject at one View. It is, in itself, full of much Obscurity and Perplexity, and the Circumstances, which must be made consistent with each other, are very numerous.

If any Thing here should seem to be delivered as new, which happens to be otherwise, the Candid will impute it to that which is the true Cause; namely, that there are many valuable Works, wherein the Sacred History is illustrated, which the Writer of this little Essay had no Opportunity of consulting.

Some will think that I have used too little Ceremony, in differing from so many Great Men, of the highest Character both for Learning and Penetration. But as it is needless to make any Apology for the Freedom I have taken, to Them who have the Courage to think for themselves; so none that I could make would be deemed sufficient, by Them who are awed by Names, and swayed by Authority more than Argument.

If I have not always been upon my Guard against a positive Manner, let it be considered that it is a Fault almost inseparable from Argumentative Writing; wherein we fear to soften our Expressions, lest we should compliment away our Meaning.

I am



*I am sensible that, in handling this Argument, I have been obliged to touch upon some Things, which may very easily be set in a ludicrous Light. This I must beg Leave to look upon as a Matter of no Consequence: For of all the weak Motives, by which Men suffer themselves to be influenced, certainly the most contemptible is the Fear of Ridicule upon a serious Subject.*

*In Case the Solution of the Difficulties in Question, which I have here offered, should not be thought satisfactory, still I flatter myself that my Attempt may not be wholly useless; and I shall be very happy, if it should engage some one better qualified to turn his Thoughts to the Subject, and give us an Explication that shall be able to stand the Test.*

*The Result of the Whole I have thrown into a Table; not from any Desire of dictating to others, but through an Apprehension that I could not be so well understood without it.*







# DISSERTATION ୧୦

## SECTION I.

**C**HRONOLOGY is perhaps, of all others, the Science which least admits of Innovations. New Conjectures, on Subjects which afford no new *Data*, have the Disadvantage of being thought impertinent, and consequently must expect to meet with a cold Reception. But as so many heavy Charges have been brought against the Author of the Book of *Genesis*, I cannot think that it will be deemed improper to attempt vindicating him from the Imputation of some of those Difficulties, which, it is probable, may be none of his, but ought to be laid at the Door of his Expositors; to whom many of them seem properly to belong.

Nothing, one would think, can be clearer, to an attentive Peruser, than that the Book of *Genesis* is by far too concise to be full;

full; that the *Sacred Historian* does by no Means study to be minutely (a) accurate; that he makes Use of round, or decimal Numbers, much more frequently than they naturally occur in the common Course of Events; that many of the Chapters and Sections are a Kind of Parentheses, or Episodes; and that an exact (b) Chronological Order is not at all aimed at.

And yet a Multitude of Learned Men, partly perhaps through Over-Caution, and a Desire of treating the *Sacred History* with as little Critical Freedom as might be, have deduced such strange Consequences from it, as cannot surely be thought to do it Honour. Many a Triumph has been afforded to it's Adversaries, through the Zeal of those, who were for supposing it to be absolutely perfect and exact. Let this be my Apology, for handling the Subject I have proposed according to the ordinary Methods of fair and candid Criticism.

There are two Conclusions drawn by the Chronologists, that are particularly pregnant with what in any other Case they would have thought Absurdities; for either of which I can by no Means see any sufficient Grounds in the History itself. These are, that Jacob lived *ONLY* twenty Years in Mesopotamia, and that Judah's Marriage with the Daughter of Shuah was *POSTERIOR* to Jacob's Return to Canaan.

(c) *Isaacson*, (d) *Bedford*, (e) *Stackhouse*, and the Authors of the

(a) For one Example, out of many, of his neglecting a minute Exactness, see *Gen. xxxv.* where *Benjamin* is reckoned among the Sons born to *Jacob* in *Padan-Aram*, though it appears in the very same Chapter that he was born near *Beth-lehem* in *Canaan*.

(b) The Death of *Isaac* may serve for an Example of his not regarding scrupulously the Order of Events. *Isaac* died aged 180 (*Gen. xxxv. 28*) *Jacob* was born when his Father was 60 (*Gen. xxv. 26*) and consequently was 120 at his Death; which yet is related before the Selling of *Joseph*, when *Jacob* was but 108, as shall be shewn in a subsequent Note.

(c) See his *Saturni Ephemerides*.

(d) See his *Scripture Chronology*.

(e) See his *History of the Bible*.

*Universal History*, all agree in these Points; and (f) *Le Clerc*, *Patrick*, *Dodd*, and other Commentators, are of the same Opinion. (g) *Capellus*, (b) *Helvicus*, (i) *Usser*, and (j) *Blair*, make *Jacob* stay only twenty Years in *Mesopotamia*, which is the main Hinge on which this whole Matter turns; but of the Time of *Jacob's* Marriage they have determined Nothing. A decent and suitable Respect is certainly due to so many Great Names; but we should never be influenced by them when Numbers are concerned; since the Opinions of ever so many Learned Men cannot make that to become probable, which on actual Calculation appears to be otherwise.

On the two Suppositions before mentioned, the *Sacred Historian* has been made to answer for Things not very credible; as may be seen by the following Table. I have taken it from *Isaacson's Chronology*, because it is the fullest I have seen, with Regard to Scripture History, excepting that of *Bedford*; who had an Hypothesis to support, in Respect of the Points in Hand; which has not been much approved of, but shall be mentioned in its Place. I have added a Column of *Jacob's* Age; because the Chronologers differ very widely about the Year of the World, and that before Christ; whereas their several Schemes are easily reducible to *Jacob's* Age, since, with Regard to That, they proceed upon the same (k) *Data*.

(f) See their respective Commentaries.

(g) See his *Chronologia Sacra*, in the Beginning of *Walton's Polyglott*.

(b) See his *Theatrum Historicum et Chronologicum*.

(i) See his *Annales Veteris Testamenti*.

(j) See his *Chronological Tables*.

(k) The *Data* for fixing the Part of Chronology here treated of are as follows. *Esau* was 40 Years old when he married (*Gen. xxvi. 34.*) Consequently his Twin-Brother *Jacob* was of the same Age. *Joseph* was born 6 Years before *Jacob* left *Haran* (*Gen. xxx. 25. and xxxi. 41.*) and is sold at 17 (*Gen. xxxvii. 2.*) He was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh, or was made his Minister (*Gen. xli. 46.*) Then follow 7 Years of Plenty (*Gen. xli. 47.*) and 2 Years of Famine (*Gen. xlv. 6.*) in the second of which *Joseph* sends for his Father. At that Time then *Joseph* was 39, as *Jacob* was 130 (*Gen. xlvii. 9.*) Consequently *Jacob* must have been 91 when *Joseph* was born, and 108 when he was sold. He died at 147 (*Gen. xlvii. 28.*)



*An Extract from ISAACSON'S Chronology.*

<i>Jacob's Age.</i>	<i>Year of the World.</i>	
0	2108	<i>Esau and Jacob born.</i>
40	2148	<i>Esau marrieth Wives of the Gentiles.</i>
63	2171	<i>Ismael dieth, aged an hundred and thirty seven.</i>
77	2185	<i>Jacob flieth to Mesopotamia.</i>
84	2192	<i>He marrieth Leah and Rachel.</i>
85	2193	<i>Reuben born of Leah.</i>
86	2194	<i>Simeon born of Leah.</i>
87	2195	<i>Levi born of Leah.</i>
88	2196	<i>Judab born of Leah.</i>
89	2197	<i>Dan born of Bilbab.</i>
91	2199	<i>Joseph born of Rachel.</i>
97	2205	<i>Jacob departeth out of Mesopotamia.</i>
98	2206	<i>— dwelleth in Succoth.</i>
99	2207	<i>— cometh to Sichem, and abideth there eight Years.</i>
101	2209	<i>Judab marrieth Shuah. [It should have been Shuah's Daughter]</i>
102	2210	<i>Er born to Judab.</i>
103	2211	<i>Onan born to Judab.</i>
104	2212	<i>Shelah born to Judab.</i>
106	2214	<i>Rape of Dinah, and Slaughter of the Shechemites.</i>
107	2215	<i>Rachel dieth of Benjamin.</i>
108	2216	<i>Joseph sold.</i>
111	2219	<i>Thamar married to Er and Onan.</i>
114	2222	<i>Thamar's Incest with Judab.</i>
115	2223	<i>Pharez and Zara born of that Incest.</i>
120	2228	<i>Isaac dieth, aged an hundred and eighty.</i>
121	2229	<i>Joseph made Governor of Egypt.</i>
130	2239	<i>(1) Jacob goeth into Egypt. [It should have been 2238]</i>
147	2255	<i>Jacob dieth, aged an hundred and forty seven.</i>

(1) *Isaacson* has placed the going into *Egypt* A. M. 2239, but by Mistake undoubtedly; For if *Jacob* was born in 2108, and lived 147 Years, dying in 2255, he must have gone into *Egypt* in 2238, because he lived there 17 Years. (*Gen.* xlvii. 28.)



## SECTION II.

THE following Difficulties result from this Way of reckoning.

1. A seeming Inconsistency arises about the Death of *Ishmael*, which shall be explained by and by.

2. *Jacob* goes into *Laban's* Service at seventy-seven, and that in Order to obtain a Wife seven Years after. — Very late in Life, even for that Age.

3. He marries no less than four Wives and Concubines after he is eighty four.

4. Twelve out of thirteen of this long-lived Patriarch's Children are crowded into seven, or at most thirteen, Years.

5. *Leah*, after bearing four Sons, at four different Births, (m) sees that she has left bearing, and gives her Maid *Zilpah* to *Jacob*; who bears him *Gad* and *Asher*; and then *Leah* bears *Issachar*, *Zebulun*, and *Dinah*; and all before *Joseph* is born, in the seventh Year of *Jacob's* Marriage. — This is barely possible.

6. Let us take it another Way. *Judah* is born, according to the foregoing Table, in A. M. 2196; and *Leah* ceasing to bear long enough to despair of having more Children (suppose but for two Years) *Jacob* takes to *Zilpah* in 2198; of whom is born *Gad* in 2199, and *Asher* in 2200. In the same Year 2200 we will suppose *Leah* to bear *Issachar*, *Zebulun* in 2201, and *Dinah* in 2202. This makes (n) *Asher*, *Issachar*, and *Zebulun*, to be younger than *Joseph*, and *Dinah* is ravished or debauched at twelve Years old.

(m) See *Genesis* xxix. and xxx.

(n) See the foregoing Table.

7. If, on the other Hand, we say that all *Leab's* Children were born before *Joseph*, the Consequence is, that (o) *Reuben* brings home the Mandrakes from the Field when he is but three Years old; for that Circumstance must be placed before the Conception of *Issachar*.

8. The Prowess of *Simeon* and *Levi*, and their treacherous Policy, at the Ages of twenty and nineteen, are very remarkable; as well as the Behaviour of their Brothers, still younger, who (p) *spoiled the City of Shalem*.

9. *Judab* begets *Er* at thirteen (q).

10. (r) *Er* marries at nine, and is so (s) profligate at that tender Age, as to be cut off by Divine Judgment.

11. (t) *Onan* marries at eight, and commits a Crime which implies Puberty.

12. (u) *Shelab* is (v) *grown* at ten, and his Marriage thought to be unreasonably delayed, by *Judab* as well as *Thamar*; for he owns her Complaint to be just. *She hath been more righteous than I, because that I gave her not to Shelah my Son.* Gen. xxxviii. 26.

13. (w) *Pharez* begets Children at thirteen; which is the more unlikely, because *Judab* had kept *Shelab* from marrying young, (x) *lest he should die as his Brethren Er and Onan*, either through too early Marriage, or youthful Folly.

(o) See the Table, and Genesis xxx. 14. &c.

(p) See Genesis xxxiv. and the Table. — I call the City *Shalem* in Conformity to the English Translation. Genesis xxxiii. 18.

(q) See the Table.

(r) See the Table.

(s) See Gen. xxxviii. 7.

(t. u.) Compare the Table with Gen. xxxviii.

(v) Genesis xxxviii. 14.

(w) He had two Sons at the going into Egypt. Compare this with the Table.

(x) Genesis xxxviii. 11.

14. (y) Ben-

12. (y) *Benjamin* is but three or four and twenty at the going down into *Egypt*, when he had no less than ten Sons.

### SECTION III.

ALL these Difficulties are solved, if we suppose that *Jacob* lived several Years at or near *Haran*, in *Padan-Aram*, or *Mesopotamia*, besides the (z) twenty that he served *Laban* for his Daughters and a Share of his Cattle; and likewise suppose that *Judah* married while his Father lived in *Haran*.

I do not recollect any Thing in Scripture which contradicts either Supposition.

(a) *Rebekah's* true Reason for sending away *Jacob* was to avoid *Esau's* intended Revenge; and her Fear of his marrying (b) among the Daughters of *Heth* was partly at least a Pretense, though, when mentioned, it had Weight with *Isaac*. We may observe, that it was not *Esau's* Marrying that WAS, but his Wives that (c) WERE a Grief of Mind unto *Isaac* and to *Rebekah*; that is, their wicked, and perhaps idolatrous, Behaviour, made them continually uneasy, or (d) weary of Life, as *Rebekah* expresses it. We need not, therefore, fix *Jacob's* Departure immediately after *Esau's* Marriages; and, indeed, *Rachel's* Age at the Birth of *Benjamin* does not seem to allow it.

But if we suppose *Jacob* to have fled to *Haran* twenty Years sooner than the common Computation, we shall gain an Interval of twenty Years, between *Jacob's* fourteen Years' Service and the six Years of

(y) Compare the Table with *Genesis* xlv. 21. If we say, as has been thought, that some of the ten were Grandchildren, this will only enhance the Difficulty.

(z) See *Genesis* xxix. and xxx.

(a) This appears from *Genesis* xxvii. 42, &c.

(b) *Genesis* xxv. 46.

(c) *Genesis* xxv. 26.

(d) *Genesis* xxvii. 46.



his (e) again taking under his Care the Cattle and Flocks of *Laban*, which were to be kept at three Days' Distance from him.

During these twenty Years they may be supposed to have lived as Relations and good Neighbours, and a Foundation may be imagined to have been laid for Jacob's (f) exceeding Increase, (for which six Years may seem to be too little) as well as for his having (g) Maid-Servants and Men-Servants and Camels and Asses, which seems to imply a State of Independency.

It is true that, after *Joseph's* Birth, *Jacob* asks *Laban*, (h) *When shall I provide for mine own House also?* But this may well imply, not that *Jacob* was at that Time worth Nothing, but that he thought it high Time to be gone from *Laban's* Lands; where he had no Right but by Sufferance, as his Son-in-law; and to repair to (i) his own Place, to the *Promised Land*; there to settle his Family, in a Country which they might hope to call their own; where likewise he had great Expectations from *Isaac*, who was (k) very rich.

But if this Passage should be thought to prove that *Jacob* had done Nothing for his own Family when *Joseph* was born, it will by no Means prove that he did not live some Time with his Father-in-Law, through Fear of *Esau*, after the fourteen Years' Service expired, before they came to a new Bargain.

And here we may recollect *Rachel's* extreme (l) Impatience at not having Children. We find she despaired of ever having Children born of her own Body, and for that Reason gave her Maid *Bilhah* to

(e) *Genesis xxx. 31.*

(f. g.) *Genesis xxx. 43.*

(h) *Genesis xxx. 30.*

(i) *Genesis xxx. 25* — It may be worth observing, that *Jacob's* Desire of returning is said to have been when *Rachel* had borne *Joseph*, and not when the Time of his Service was expired, as was natural to say, if that had been the Case.

(k) *Genesis xxvi. 13. 14.* — Here we may remark, that *Jacob's* long Absence from his Country and his rich Father will appear very natural, if we recollect his great Dread of *Esau*; which operated on him very strongly, when he did return at last. See *Genesis xxxii. 11.*

(l) See *Genesis xxx. 1, &c.*



*Jacob*; who bare him *Dan* and *Naphtali*, before *Zilpah* bare *Gad* and *Asber*; after which *Leah* bare *Issachar*, *Zebulun*, and *Dinab*. All this was before the Birth of *Joseph*, as the thirtieth of *Genesis* seems plainly to prove. What Time then is left for *Rachel's* Barrenness, and her Uneasiness upon that Account? It should seem that *Bilhab* must have been given six or seven Years before *Joseph* was born, and this naturally leads us to suspect that *Rachel* had been married more than seven Years before that Event, and seems to be a strong Argument for such an Interval as is contended for.

By the Supposition of such an Interval, we not only vindicate the *Sacred Historian* from the strange Improbabilities before stated about the Births of *Leah's* and *Zilpah's* Children, but likewise see why *Joseph* was beloved by *Jacob*, (m) *more than all his Children* born before him, as *the Son of his Old Age*; which he is called in Contradistinction to his (n) elder Brothers, who, therefore, were not such. This Text cannot be made Sense of, as it is at present translated, but by supposing an Interval of some Years between *Joseph's* Birth and those of his elder Brothers.

But it must be owned that there is another Sense of this Passage, which is countenanced by ancient Versions, namely, *because he was a wise and prudent Son* (o). The Authors of the *Universal History*, and others before them, would read it *because he was as wise and prudent as a Senator*. The skilful in *Hebrew* must determine which is the most natural Interpretation of the Words, when the supposed Chronological Difficulties are laid out of the Question. But it should be remembered, that *Benjamin* is likewise called (p) *a Child of his Old Age*; the Word translated *Old Age* being the same in both Cases; and I think

(m) *Genesis* xxxvii. 3.

(n) *Benjamin* was younger; which I take Notice of to prevent Objections.

(o) See *Poole's Synopsis*, and *Universal History*, Book I. Chap. 7. or *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*, Book III. Chap. 4.

(p) *Genesis* xlv. 20. In the Speech here referred to, *Judab* calls *Benjamin* a *Lad*, and a *little one*: But it is well known that the Words so translated do not imply that he was not grown up, or that he was not married. No Interpreter, I believe, has supposed that he could be less than 23, and it is highly probable that he was above 30.

Nothing is recorded of the Prudence of *Benjamin*. Perhaps then the *Samaritan* and other Versions, referred to in the *Universal History*, were made as they are, on Account of the Difficulties attending the other Interpretation. *Le Clerc* could not have been ignorant of this Attempt to solve the Difficulty; but how little satisfactory it was to him we may gather from his own Words. (q) "*Hic in rebus occurrunt nodi, quos nemo hætenus solvit, neque porro, ut opinor, solvet.*"

If the proposed Interval be admitted, we may observe that *Ruben*, when he found *Mandrakes* in (r) *Wheat Harvest*, might well have Business in the Field.

*Simeon* and *Levi* will also be of a proper Age to conduct the (s) Enterprize against *Shalem*, or *Shechem*, and to execute it, with the Help of *Jacob's* Servants; who, by these Means, are supposed to be numerous. They could never do it themselves.

The (t) *Spoilers of the City* can no longer be said to be Boys.

(u) *Le Clerc* indeed places the Destruction of the *Shechemites*, or *Shalemites*, between the Selling of *Joseph* and the Going into *Egypt*; to which he is led by the Perplexities attending the Ages of *Simeon*, *Levi*, and *Dinah*, at the Time of that Event. He could scarcely otherwise have thought of it. For it is plain from *Genesis* xxxiv. 30. and xxxv. 5. that *Jacob* and his Family fled from the Neighbourhood of *Shalem*, or *Shechem*, called afterwards *Sychem* and *Sychar*, on that Occasion, and proceeded (as we find in *Genesis* xxxv.) by Way of *Bethel* and *Bethlehem*, to *Mamre*, there to join *Isaac*. X

On the Strength of the Transposition he has made of the Slaughter at *Shalem*, (v) *Le Clerc* has ventured to suppose *Gad* to have been of

(q) *Le Clerc's Commentary* on *Genesis* xxxvii. 3.

(r) See *Genesis* xxx. 14.

(s) See *Genesis* xxxiv. 27. &c.

(t) *Genesis* xxxiv. 27. — Mr. *Dodd* thinks that none but *Simeon* and *Levi* spoiled the City; but the Context seems greatly to avour the received Opinion.

(u) See the *Chronological Table* at the End of his *Commentary* upon *Genesis*.

(v) See the Notes on his *Chronological Table* before mentioned.

the same Age with *Joseph*, *Asher* to have been one, *Issachar* two, and *Zebulun* three Years (*w*) younger. But that they were not so seems to be clear from the thirtieth Chapter of *Genesis*.

That *Joseph* was in Fact considerably younger than *Gad* and *Asher* seems to follow from *Genesis* xxxvii. 2. where *the Lad* appears, as I conceive, to be committed to the Care of *the Sons of Bilhah and the Sons of Zilpah*; that is, to *Dan*, *Naphtali*, *Gad*, and *Asher*. If, as some think, it should be rendred *he was a Servant* with them, the Argument will be still stronger. See *Poole's Synopsis*,

I believe it has never been doubted, that the (*x*) ten elder Sons of *Jacob*, *Reuben* excepted, were concerned in selling their Brother *Joseph*. Now, as he was but seventeen at that Time, such as were younger than he must have been Boys indeed, and it will appear incredible that they who were Men should have admitted them into their dangerous and (*y*) horrid Counsels. According to *Le Clerc*, *Zebulun* was but fourteen.

*Bedford* and others, distressed by the Difficulties attending the common Computation, have taken it for granted, as *Bedford* expresses himself, that *Jacob* married *Leah* and *Rachel* within six Weeks after he came to *Haran*; which enables them to settle the Births of his Children conveniently enough. (*z*) For this Purpose, they would understand the Words (*a*) *Fulfil her Week*, not of fulfilling *Leah's* Week, or keeping the (*b*) seven Days Nuptial Feast on his Marriage with her;

(*w*) That this was the Supposition he approved of appears from his using it in Note 4. with Regard to the Age of *Dinah*.

(*x*) See *Genesis* xlii. 3 and 21. and xlv. 3, &c.

(*y*) See *Genesis* xxxvii. 18, &c.

(*z*) "If the Fulfilling of a *Week* was thought sufficient to make a Bargain for seven Years in the Case of *Rachel*, the Fulfilling of as many Days might be thought as sufficient in the Case of *Leah*. And therefore taking it for granted that *Jacob* married both in six Weeks after he came to *Haran*, the Births of the Patriarchs may be computed in the following Manner," &c. *Scripture Chronology*, Book III. Chap. 4.

See *Poole's Synopsis*, and *Usher's Annals*. It must be acknowledged, that the learned Archbishop was of this Opinion; but he has not been much followed.

(*a*) *Genesis* xxix. 27. See *Bishop Patrick's Commentary*

(*b*) See *Judges* xiv. 12. and *Selden De Jure Naturali et Gentium*, Book V. Chap. 5. but



but of fulfilling *Rachel's* Week, or serving seven Days as an Earnest of his seven Years' Service. But I cannot help thinking that whoever reads carefully *Genesis* xxix. from the fourteenth to the thirty first Verse, will be of Opinion that the Words will not bend to such an Interpretation.

#### SECTION IV.

IT is obvious to object that, if *Jacob* went so early to *Haran* as I have suggested, *Isaac* was (c) mistaken above sixty Years as to the Time of his own Death, and that *Esau* was as much (d) mistaken in Regard to it; since *Jacob's* Flight was owing to *Esau's* Resentment of his having intercepted their Father's last Benediction, as was then supposed. The Answer is easy: For that both were greatly mistaken is very evident, and whether they were mistaken sixty three Years, or only forty three, is not at all material.

It may likewise be objected, that *Jacob's* Family were young when he left *Haran*, because he says (e) *the Children are tender*. But this is said to *Esau*, of whom he was greatly afraid, as an Excuse for not marching with him; and it seems to appear that he did not follow him to *Seir*, as he (f) said he would. Besides, it was plainly applicable to *Joseph*, and the plural is often used for the singular. Perhaps it might be sufficiently applicable to *Zebulun* and *Dinah*, to serve for an Excuse. Neither is it unlikely that there might be many Children among the Servants; for they were Servants for Life in that Age. Accordingly *Abraham* (g) speaks of his Servant *Eliezer* as of *one born in his House*. *Jacob* says, in grateful Astonishment at God's Mercy, (h) *Now I am become two Bands!* which certainly does not give us an

(c) See *Genesis* xxvii. 4.

(d) See *Genesis* xxvii. 41.

(e) *Genesis* xxxiii. 13.

(f) *Genesis* xxxiii. 14.

(g) *Gen. fi.* xv. 3.—See also *Genesis* xiv. 14. xvii. 12, 13. and other Places.

(h) *Genesis* xxxii. 10.



Idea of a Person travelling with a few Servants and his young Children, any more than the Affair of the *Shechemites*.

As to Jacob's (i) *setting his Sons and his Wives upon Camels*, that is, providing them Beasts to ride upon, I suppose Nothing concerning their Age can be inferred from thence; though it must be owned that Bishop *Patrick* has interpreted the Words to that Purpose.

If some of *Jacob's* Sons were not grown up, we shall hardly be able to account for his Proposal of setting any of his Goods (k) *before His Brethren and Laban's Brethren*, that is, the Relations on both Sides, that they might *judge betwixt them*. It can scarcely be thought, that he meant a Reference to Them only, who had accompanied *Laban* in the Pursuit, and perhaps were fired with the Hopes of Plunder, though they might be the Relations of both.

As to that Expression of *Jacob's*, which has led Expositors into all these Difficulties, namely, that he (l) *had been twenty Years with Laban*,—it was used by Way of *Re crimination*; when his Time of *Service* was the only Thing to the Purpose, and the Mention of any other Time he might have been with him would only have made against himself. He does not say that he had been with him *only* twenty Years. Much less does he say that he had been in his Neighbourhood, or sojourned in *Mesopotamia*, no more than twenty Years.

If any think this Solution unsatisfactory, they may possibly be of Opinion, that a Mistake has antiently happened in the Number *twenty*, through the Negligence or Presumption of Transcribers. Such Mistake, or wilful Change, will appear to be the more probable, if we consider the Words with Attention. *Thus have I been twenty Years in thy House I served thee fourteen Years for thy two Daughters, and six Years for thy Cattle. Genesis xxxi. 41.* The first Clause of these Words is by no

(i) *Genesis xxxi. 17.*

(k) *Genesis xxxi. 37.* See also Verse 32. And see farther Mention of *Jacob's* Brethren at Verse 46 which seems to shew that his Family were not very young.

(l) *Genesis xxxi. 38 and 41.*

Means restrained to signify the same Time with the *second*. The Time he had been in his *House* is not necessarily the same and no longer Time than he had been in his *Service*. But if we suppose *forty*, or any other Number, to have been originally in the Place of *twenty*, Nothing could be more natural than to change it for *twenty*, being the Total of the *fourteen* and *six* after mentioned. And yet the first Number does not necessarily refer to the other two, as was before observed. With Regard to the thirty eighth Verse, we may easily imagine that, in such a Case, it would undergo the like Alteration of Course. This is mere Conjecture, and I do not presume to build upon it. But it is certain that Mistakes, far less natural, have been supposed, by very able Commentators, and for the Sake of Difficulties far less embarrassing.

If neither of these Solutions should please, one might very fairly be allowed to say, that *twenty*, being a round Number, might not improbably be put for any Number under thirty. For round Numbers are very commonly used in the Book of *Genesis*; much oftner than they naturally occur in the Course of Events; as will be evident to any one, who shall look it over with a View to that Particular. Upon this Supposition then, that, for aught we know, the round Number *twenty* may stand for seven or eight and twenty, we shall have a tolerable Solution of all Difficulties; I mean, if we can admit the before mentioned Supposition, that *Jacob* married *Leah* and *Rachel* soon after he came to *Haran*, and if we are satisfied with Bishop *Patrick's* Interpretation, hereafter mentioned, of *Esau's going to Ishmael*. I must acknowledge, for my own Part, that this seems to be the least satisfactory Solution I have proposed, and therefore shall put the Result of it into a (m) Note, and proceed.

(m) If the Suppositions above mentioned were to be admitted, *Judah, Er, Onan*, and *Pharez*, might be imagined to have married at sixteen each, and *Shelah* to have been eighteen or nineteen, when his Marriage was thought to have been too long delayed. The other Difficulties would vanish.

It might be observed, in Support of this Solution, that *ten* seems to be put indefinitely, as I have conjectured concerning *twenty*, in the very Verse in Question. *Thou hast changed my Wages ten Times.*

There

There is a Circumstance which strongly corroborates the Opinion of *Jacob's* having continued in *Haran* longer than has been thought, and it deserves to be attentively considered. If *Jacob's* Sons were not well advanced in Life when they went to *Egypt*, how came it that they had no Sons born there? In the forty sixth of *Genesis* the Sons and Grandsons *Jacob* took with him are enumerated by their Names, and carefully cast up. Words can scarcely be made to speak more plainly. Now from the twenty sixth of *Numbers* it is very clear, that the Sum total of the *Israelites*, who came out of the Wilderness, descended from Part of those very Persons, who in the forty sixth of *Genesis* are said to have gone down into *Egypt*, including *Joseph* and his two Sons, who are taken Notice of as being there already. Consequently none of the twelve Patriarchs had Sons, from whom Male Posterity proceeded and continued, born to them after *Jacob's* going into *Egypt*. From whence it is a fair, if not a necessary Conclusion, that they could not have been so young at the Time of that Event, as has been hitherto supposed.

On the Supposition I have ventured to make, that Difficulty will likewise be removed, which has staggered (n) *Le Clerc* and others so much, and put them upon preferring the Samaritan Reading to the Hebrew; I mean (o) *Esau's* going to *Ishmael*, and marrying his Daughter, after *Jacob's* going to *Haran*; before which Event, as they place it, *Ishmael* was dead: For he died in the (p) sixty fourth Year of *Jacob's* Life, whom they do not allow to have gone to *Haran* till he was seventy seven.

(q) Bishop *Patrick* and others attempt to solve this Difficulty, by supposing that going to *Ishmael* means going to the Family of *Ishmael*;

(n) See the Notes on his *Chronological Table* before cited.

(o) See *Genesis* xxviii. 9.

(p) *Abraham* was eighty six when *Ishmael* was born (*Gen.* xvi. 16.) and an hundred when *Isaac* was born (*Gen.* xxi. 5.) *Ishmael* then was fourteen Years older than *Isaac*, who was sixty when *Jacob* was born (*Gen.* xxv. 26.) at which Time *Ishmael* must have been seventy four. He died at the Age of an hundred and thirty seven (*Gen.* xxv. 17.) when *Jacob* consequently was sixty three.

(q) See his *Commentary* on *Genesis* xxviii. and *Poole's Synopsis*.



but (r) *Le Clerc* calls it *gravissima Difficultas*. He cannot be supposed to have been a Stranger to this Solution, and it is plain then it was not to his Satisfaction. There are indeed good Reasons why it should not. The Family, or Posterity of *Ishmael*, are never called *Ishmael*, nor was any particular City or Country called *Ishmael*, that I have ever heard of. It seems strange then, that, where his Name is mentioned, his Family, or any Thing but himself, shall be supposed to be intended. Nor is it likely that the Word *Ishmael* should be used so very equivocally, as to bear two different Meanings in the same Sentence.

But it is urged, by Bishop *Patrick* and others, that *Mahalath the Daughter of Ishmael* is called *the Sister of Nebaioth*, *Genesis xxviii. 9.* and from thence it is conjectured that *Ishmael* was dead, and *Nebaioth* the Head of the Family. In Answer it may be observed, that *Ishmael* had (s) *twelve Sons*, and perhaps as many Daughters, probably by several Wives, either successive, or otherwise, according to the Custom of the Times. *Mahalath* would naturally be called the Sister of *Nebaioth*, if she was his Sister by Mother as well as Father. Thus *Simeon* and *Levi* are styled (t) *Dinah's Brethren*, (u) *Benjamin Joseph's*, and (v) *Joseph Benjamin's Brother*, all by Way of particular Designation. It may likewise be observed, that in *Genesis xxv. 20.* *Rebekah* is described as the *Sister of Laban* as well as the *Daughter of Bethuel*, and that *Laban* is much spoken of in *Genesis xxiv.* at her Marriage; though the *Bethuel* (w) mentioned on that Occasion was much more probably her (x) Father *Bethuel*, then far advanced in Years, and declining

(r) See the Notes before cited.

The Jews likewise thought this a great Difficulty, and therefore coined a Story of *Jacob's* hiding himself fourteen Years from *Esau*, before he went to *Laban*. See *Willer's Hexapla in Genesin*.

(s) See *Genesis xxv. 16.*

(t) See *Genesis xxxiv. 25.*

(u) See *Genesis xlii. 4.* and *xliii. 30.*

(v) See *Genesis xlii. 38.* and *xliv. 20.*

(w) See *Genesis xxiv. 50.* and *Patrick's Commentary*. See also Verses 53 and 55; where it is probable *Bethuel*, if a Brother, would have been mentioned, as well as *Laban*.

(x) See *Genesis xxiv. 24.*

Business,

Business, and therefore little spoken of, than a supposed Brother of hers of that Name; whose Existence is extremely problematical, depending on the Authority, or rather Conjecture of *Josepbus*, a very weak Writer at the best. Nor should it be forgotten that *Mabalath*, or *Bashematb*, the Wife of *Esau*, is again called the *Sister* of *Nebaioth*, *Genesis* xxxvi. 3. probably, as being his *own* Sister, or because he was the eldest Son, not because her Father *Ismael* was dead when she was married: Which would seem a strange Reason, if applied to this Passage, and therefore is not the true Reason of her being called so in the other. If true, it would suit with both.

Now if *Ismael* was living when *Esau* married his Daughter, as seems to be the most natural Sense of the Text, it must be granted that *Jacob* went to *Haran* at least fourteen Years sooner than we have been taught to think.

## SECTION V.

WE will now inquire into the Time of *Judab's* Marriage with the Daughter of *Shuab*.

The thirty eighth Chapter of *Genesis* is plainly a Kind of Episode, containing the History of *Judab*; and there is as much Reason to place his Marriage after the Sale of *Josepb* (for there it comes in) as after *Jacob's* coming from *Haran*. After the Sale of *Josepb* it would certainly have been (y) placed, if the two and twenty Years, between that Event and the Going into *Egypt*, could possibly have made *Judab* a Grandfather by his Son *Pharez*, who was begotten upon his own Daughter-in-Law.

Since then there seems to be a Necessity for allowing that *Judab's* Marriage is not related in the Order of Time, but must be transposed,

(y) The Authors of the *Universal History* have actually placed it there, though they allow that the Sons of *Pharez* were born before the Going into *Egypt*. See *Book I. Chap. 7.*

we are as much at Liberty to place it *before* the Coming from *Haran* as *after*. Indeed I cannot see how the Story of (x) *Er*, *Onan*, *Sbelab*, *Tbamar*, *Pbarex*, and his two Sons, can possibly be true, upon the common Computation. But Interpreters had straitened themselves too much in the Time allotted to *Jacob*'s Stay at *Haran*, to go a single Year farther back than they have in *Judab*'s Marriage.

(a) *Le Clerc* seems to think that all may be accounted for, if each of *Judab*'s Sons be supposed to have married at about fourteen. But he takes no Notice of *Sbelab*'s Marriage having been delayed after he was grown up, and (penetrating as he is) does not seem to be aware that he supposes *Judab* himself to marry at nine Years old.

*Bedford*'s Scheme likewise proves defective in this Part. For, though he has married *Judab*, *Er*, *Onan*, and *Pbarex*, at fourteen each (which is a very strange Supposition, especially for the Age they lived in) he is (b) forced to overlook *Sbelab*'s Age, the Delay of his Marriage after he was grown up, and (c) the Days that were multiplied after *Onan*'s Death, before *Judab* lost his Wife, was comforted, or ceased to mourn for her, and lay with *Tbamar*; and to place the Birth of *Pbarex* in the very Year after *Onan*'s Marriage, which is manifestly inconsistent with the History.

An (d) Attempt has been made to get over these Difficulties, by supposing the Sons of *Pbarex* (together with those of *Benjamin*) to have been born after the Going into *Egypt*; and, though the forty sixth of *Genesis* seems so (e) clear to the contrary, this Hypothesis has been much followed. But in *Acts* vii. 14. we find that *threescore*

(x) See *Genesis* xxxviii. And for the Phrase in *those Days*, Verse 1. See *Le Clerc*.

(a) See his *Commentary* on *Genesis* xxxviii. 1. and his *Chronological Table* before referred to.

(b) See *Scripture Chronology*. Book III. Chap. 4. Table 31.

(c) See *Genesis* xxxviii. 12. Marginal Translation.

(d) See *Poole's Synopsis*, on *Genesis* xvi.

(e) In a Note on Book I. Chap. 7. of the *Universal History*, it is well observed, that the Supposition of the Sons of *Benjamin* and *Pbarex* having been born in *Egypt* is point-blank contrary to the Text. Vol. I. Fol. Page 458.



and fifteen Souls were CALLED or invited by *Joseph* into *Egypt*; that is, *threescore and fifteen*, *Joseph* and Family included; which is the Method of reckoning used in *Genesis* xlv. (f) Some have been of Opinion that *St. Stephen* makes Use of a different Way of Computation from that in *Genesis*: But Nothing can be clearer, than that he takes his Narrative from thence, so far as that Book reaches. As to the Difference in the Numbers, it arises, either from his quoting the *Septuagint*, as is generally done in the New Testament; or else from the Text in the *Acts* having been altered, to agree with that Translation, which was antiently of great Authority. *Genesis* xlv. 27. says expressly, they were *threescore and ten*, who came into *Egypt*; in which Number it plainly includes the Sons of *Benjamin*, and *Pharez*.

The *Sacred Historian* himself must needs be an unexceptionable Judge of his own Meaning. In the first of *Exodus*, speaking of those who (g) came into *Egypt*, he tells us again they (h) were *seventy Souls*, for *Joseph* was in *Egypt* already; that is, they were *seventy*, *Joseph* and his Sons included. Nothing can well be plainer than what he says, *Deut. x. 22* Thy Fathers went down into *Egypt* with *threescore and ten* Persons, and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude. Notwithstanding all this Evidence, Commentators of great Name have supposed that the Sons of *Benjamin* and *Pharez* were born in *Egypt*, in manifest Opposition to the Text. The Truth is, they were perplexed by the Difficulties attending this Affair, and they have cut the Knot which they should have untied.

Some Interpreters say (i) "the two Sons of *Pharez* are set down, though perhaps not now born, to supply the Places of *Er* and *Onan*," who died in the Land of *Canaan*. But why were their Places to be supplied? Shall we think there was some favourite Number to be made up? And why were the Sons of (k) *Beriab* set down? They were then born, it may be answered. Why then were the Sons of *Benjamin* set down,

(f) See *Whitby* on the Place.

(g. h.) See *Exodus* i. 1 and 5.

(i) *Patrick's Commentary*, on *Genesis* xlv. 12.

(k) See *Genesis* xlv. 17.

who are pretended not to have been born? Whose Places do they supply?

By other Expositors we are told that the Sons of *Pbarez* and *Benjamin* went down into Egypt (1) *in the Loins of their Fathers*; which would be just as true of their Great-Grandsons as of Them. And did none else carry down Posterity *in their Loins*, besides *Benjamin* and *Pbarez*? No one I believe has yet suspected, that great Part of the Multitudes who went out of Egypt went out *in the Loins of their Fathers*. Yet *Deut. x. 22.* plainly compares the inconsiderable Number who went into Egypt with the vast Multitudes descended from them; who therefore went thither in the very same Sense that their Posterity came from thence, and were as certainly *seventy*, as their Descendants were *like the Stars for Multitude*.

Upon the Whole I suppose it may be safely concluded that the several Texts relating to this Matter are as clear as can be wished; that the Sons of *Pbarez* and *Beriab*, and of no other Grandsons of *Jacob*, are mentioned, for this plain Reason, because they two had Sons at the Time spoken of, and the rest had not; that the Sons of *Benjamin* and *Pbarez* are said to have gone into Egypt, for no other Reason than because they really went thither; and, consequently, that the Solutions I have been opposing are by no Means satisfactory, though recommended by Names one cannot help respecting.

As to *Shuab's* Daughter having been married at (m) *Adullam*, afterwards within the Tribe of *Judab*, it creates no Difficulty: For we are not to take it for granted that *Jacob's* Family never went to (n) *Canaan*, to pay their Duty to *Isaac*, merely because we have no Accounts of the Visits. *Judab*, we are told, (o) *went down from his Brethren*, that is, in Scripture Language, from his *Relations*, when

(1) See Poole's *Synopsis*, on *Genesis* xli. and Hammond on *Acts* vii. 14.

(m) See *Genesis* xlviii. 1.

(n) *Adullam* was not far out of the Route which *Jacob* took on his Return to his Father; as may be seen in several Maps of the *Holy Land*.

(o) *Genesis* xxxviii. 1.

he met with *Sbuab's* Daughter: which Expression seems to imply a Journey, perhaps an Elopement.

Neither does it follow that *Judab* had no Children in *Haran*, merely because we do not read of their accompanying *Jacob* from thence. Indeed, if he was married before *Jacob's* quitting *Haran*, he had, not improbably, left his Father; and the going down from his Brethren seems most naturally to signify leaving the Family; for we need not have been told that he must go from his Father's House before he could go to *Adullam*.

To this it may be objected, that *Jacob* had his eleven Sons with him, when he passed over the Ford Jabbok, as appears from *Genesis* xxxii. 22, and that *Benjamin* was not then born. But why should *Dinab* be omitted? The original Word, here translated *Sons*, is in other Places *Children*, particularly in *Genesis* xxx. 26. and xxxiii. 13. where it was never doubted that *Dinab* was included. That the Word comprehends Daughters as well as Sons, is evident from *Exodus* xxi. 4. *Jacob's* eleven *Children* then may signify his ten Sons (*Judab* excluded) and his Daughter *Dinab*; and we need not have Recourse to her having been locked up in a Chest, which is the Rabbies' Method of accounting for her being omitted; as may be seen in Willet's *Hexapla*, with many other Rabbinical Conceits, equally ridiculous. These Conjectures are proposed merely as such, and with Deference to the Judgment of the Learned.

In *Genesis* xxxviii. 5. we are told that *Judah* was at *Chezib*, when his Wife bare *Shelah*; and *Le Clerc*, *Patrick*, and other Interpreters, have been puzzled to find a good Reason for this Particular's being recorded. But why might not *Chezib* or *Achzib* (for they are thought to be the same) have been the Place of his Residence, while absent from the Family, and of the Birth of *Shelah*, and his two elder Brothers? This would afford a very satisfactory Reason for the Mention of *Judah's* being there. And he was (i. e. he dwelt) at *Chezib*, when she bare him.

It has often been observed, that (p) *Simeon* and *Levi*, Brothers of the whole Blood to *Dinab*, very naturally revenged her Disgrace, and that

(p) See *Genesis* xxxiv. 25.



*Reuben* was no Partaker with them, because he was of a milder Nature, as (q) appeared at the Selling of *Joseph*. But why was not *Judab* concerned? Possibly, because he had left the Family: for as to *Issachar* and *Zebulun*, they might be thought too young to be trusted in so cruel a Design. The whole thirty eighth Chapter seems to give an Idea of *Judab*, as of a Person living apart from his Father, and possessed of a separate Property.

It appears indeed that he was with his Brethren at the (r) Sale of *Joseph*, and at the (s) fetching Corn from *Egypt*. But *Jacob* was then come back to *Canaan*, to the Neighbourhood of *Adullam*, where *Judab* married, and of *Achizib*, where I have supposed him to reside, at least till his Father's Return.

But whether *Judab* had, or had not, left the Family at the Time of their coming from *Haran*, we cannot conclude, as was intimated before, that *Jacob* had no Grandchildren with him, when he returned to *Canaan*, barely from their not being mentioned. Perhaps his pleading that *the Children were tender* is rather an Argument to the contrary; for his youngest Son *Joseph* was six Years old at least.

## SECTION VI.

LET us now attend to the Circumstance of *Rachel*'s Age at the Birth of her Son *Benjamin*, and that of *Jacob*'s supposed Residence near *Shalem*, which is necessarily connected with it.

When her Marriage was proposed to be delayed for (t) seven Years, we may reasonably suppose her to have been very young. If she was fourteen at *Jacob*'s coming (and she might well be younger) I make her sixty four at *Benjamin*'s Birth; if we allow, as many Chronologers

(q) See *Genesis* xxxvii. 21, 22.

(r) See *Genesis* xxxvii. 26.

(s) As appears from *Genesis* xlii. 3, and other Places.

(t) See *Genesis* xxix. 18, &c.

have done, that *Jacob* was ten Years on his Journey; and this perhaps will not seem an extraordinary Age, for that Time. But I know of no Scriptural Authority for *Jacob's* staying by the Way, one Year at *Succoth*, and six or eight Years near *Shalem*. The Chronologers and Commentators make him do so, in Order to gain as much Time as possible, for putting Swords by the Sides of *Simeon* and *Levi*. We may venture then to strike off at least nine Years, of the ten commonly allowed for *Jacob's* Removal, and suppose *Rachel* to have been twelve at *Jacob's* coming to *Haran*. In this Case, she will be fifty three at the Birth of *Benjamin*, and her Age will fall within the Bounds even of modern Credibility. Besides, five or six Years might be spared from the proposed Interval of twenty, if her Age could still be thought too great.

That *Jacob* was some Time on his Removal, and made some Stay by the Way, must be granted; for he (u) *built an House and made Booths for his Cattle at Succoth*, (v) *and he bought a Parcel of a Field where he*

(u) *Genesis xxxiii. 17.* An Overflowing of the *Jordan* might probably prevent his passing with his Herds and Flocks, for some Time. See *Joshua iii. 15.* and *I. Chron. xii 15.*

(v) *Genesis xxxiii. 19.* A long Stay near *Shalem* would not appear natural; for as *Jacob* was now reconciled to *Esau*, there was Nothing to obstruct his purposed Return to *Isaac*. It would appear unnatural for another Reason. In *Genesis xxxvii. 13.* &c. we find *Jacob's* Sons feeding the Flock in *Shechem*, within a Year or two after the Massacre of the *Shechemites*, according to the common Computation, though they had fled from the Neighbourhood on that Account; which is much more likely to have happened after ten or eleven Years, when Time might have worn off, in some Measure, the Memory of their Perfidy and Cruelty. This Difficulty has produced a Conjecture, that there might have been two *Shechems*; and it is no more than a Conjecture. See Mr. Dodd

On the other Hand, some Stay near *Shalem* appears very natural. *Jacob* set out while *Laban* went to shear his Sheep (*Genesis xxxi. 19*) that is, in the End of the Spring, in *Syria* about March or April. If he was stopped at *Succoth* by *Jordan's* having overflowed all his Banks all the Time of Harvest (*Josh. iii. 15.*) by the Time he came to *Shalem*, the Flocks with Young (*Genesis xxxii. 13*) that is (as *Bishop Patrick* observes) which had their Young following or sucking them, would be near their autumnal Time of bringing forth; for they bring forth in Autumn, as well as Spring, in those Countries. On this Occasion, *Jacob* might buy that Parcel of a Field where he had spread his Tent, still so exceeding verdant and fruitful, as Mr. Maundrell describes it. From hence, after the Massacre at *Shalem*, he is obliged to flee, and dwells, or continues some Time, at *Beisul*, as commanded to do, *Genesis xxxv. 1.* His Vow performed, and perhaps the Winter over, he pursues his Journey: and thus we have a probable and consistent Account of his Return from *Padan-Aram* to *Haac* his Father. *Gen. xxxi. 18.*

*had spread his Tent near Shalem, and erected there an Altar.* But that he was not ten Years, or any long Time, on his Passage from *Haran* to *Bethel*, may be inferred from *Genesis xxxv. 9—15.* And God appeared again to Jacob when he came out of *Padan-Aram*; &c. And he called the Name of the Place *Bethel*. He was coming then from *Padan-Aram*, when he came to *Bethel*. It is the same Expression, when he came from *Padan-Aram*, which is used on his (w) coming to *Shalem*, and on his (x) leaving it, and I suppose in the same Sense. In *Genesis xlviii. 7.* Jacob says, when I came from *Padan*, Rachel died. In neither of these Passages is it said when he came from *Shalem* or *Shechem*; which would have been natural, if he had lived there several Years. Besides, it was (y) to go to *Isaac his Father*, that he set out from *Padan-Aram*.

Another Argument why Jacob could be no long while on his Passage from *Haran* to *Bethel* is this. *Benjamin* was born (z) on the Way from *Bethel*, and if Jacob spent ten Years in his Removal, *Benjamin* was but three and twenty, if he spent one only, *Benjamin* was two and thirty, when he went into *Egypt* with ten Sons; which is most probable I need not say. It may be added that, in the former Case, (a) Jacob must have begotten *Benjamin* at an hundred and six, in the latter at ninety seven; which is much more probable than the other, though it may seem (b) extraordinary even in that early Age.

Again

(w) See *Genesis xxxiii. 18.*

(x) See *Genesis xxxv. 9.*

(y) See *Genesis xxxi. 18.*

(z) See *Genesis xxxv. 16, &c.*

(a) See the foregoing Table.

(b) That *Abraham* should have a Son at an hundred was thought very extraordinary, or rather miraculous. See *Genesis xvii. 17, and xviii. 12, Romans iv. 19, and Hebrews xi. 12.*

This naturally leads one's Thoughts to his Marriage with *Keturah*; on which I will make an Observation or two, though it does not fall within the Limits which I have prescribed to myself.

This Marriage, which produced six Sons (*Genesis xxv. 1, 2, &c.*) is usually placed after the Marriage of *Isaac*, when *Abraham* was 140 (*Genesis xxi. 5, and xxv. 20*) but it has often been suspected that it happened before, though related after it. The Scripture itself, in my Opinion, seems not obscurely to hint that such was really the Fact. In *Genesis xxv. 5, 6.* we find that *Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac: But unto the Sons of the Concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave Gifts, and sent them away from*



Again, if *Jacob* spent so many Years in returning to his Father, and *Benjamin* was but three and twenty at the Going into *Egypt*, the latter could have been but one Year old when his Brother was sold. How then shall we account for *Joseph's* earnest Desire of seeing him (*Genesis* xlii.) which appears to have sprung from the most tender Regard formerly conceived for him? Or with what Propriety could he have called

from *Isaac* his Son, while he yet lived. The Chapter preceding (Verse 36.) seems to shew that this was previous and in Order to *Isaac's* Marriage with *Rebekah*. Even if the Words, unto him hath he given all that he hath, mean not a Resignation of his Wealth (as seems to be the most obvious and easy Sense of them) but a Settlement or Promise only, still we very naturally look for his portioning his other Children; and we find both Circumstances joined in the Passage just quoted. They seem then to have been sent away before the Marriage of *Isaac*; whom, we may observe, the Servant who fetched *Rebekah*, on his Return, calls his Master (Verse 65.) and who brings his Wife into his Mother *Sarah's* Tent (Verse 67.) which it is probable therefore *Abraham* no longer wanted.

Now if we place the Marriage with *Keturah* after the Birth of *Ishmael*, who was fourteen Years older than *Isaac* (*Genesis* xvi. 16. and xxi. 5.) there will be Time sufficient for the Birth of her six Sons, and for the coming on of that Debility, which appears to have been upon *Abraham* at ninety nine.

It may be objected, that *Abraham*, not *Abram*, marries *Keturah*, and that he was not named *Abraham* till he was ninety nine (*Genesis* xvii. 1, &c.) But this is not conclusive: for *Jacob*, after he is named *Israel*, is often called *Jacob*; as may be seen in *Genesis* xxxii. and following Chapters.

The frequent Mention of *Ishmael* SINGLY may likewise be objected (*Genesis* xvii. 18, &c. xxi. 9, &c.) But it should be remembered that he was considered for a Time as the Heir of the Promise. If this be not satisfactory, *Keturah's* Marriage must be placed after the Birth of *Isaac*, and *Abraham's* recruited Strength. As to *Isaac's* being called the only Son (*Genesis* xxii. 2, &c.) it means the only Son by *Sarah*: for otherwise *Ishmael* would be excluded.

The Notion that *Abraham*, on receiving the Promise of *Isaac*, was favoured with such an extraordinary Renovation of Youth, as to enable him to become the Father of a numerous Family, forty or fifty Years after he had been as good as dead (*Heb.* xi. 12.) seems to be very extravagant, though it has been embraced by many.

The Rabbins' Notion, that *Keturah* was *Hagar*, is attended with very great Difficulties; as the Commentators have shewn.

*Keturah* is called both a Wife and a Concubine (*Gen.* xxv. 1. *I Chron.* i. 32.) The Difference was not much. She might have been looked upon as a Wife after the Death of *Sarah*, and as a Concubine before. Or why might not *Abraham* have more Wives than one, as well as *Jacob*? The Bond Woman *Hagar* is also called his Wife, in *Gen.* xvi. 3.

As for the Expression *Then again* (*Gen.* xxv. 1.) perhaps the Passage is better rendered *Now Abraham had taken him another Wife, &c.* as I have somewhere seen.

We are the more justified in supposing this Marriage of *Abraham's* to be related out of its Place, because it is evidently the Case with Regard to his Death, which we have an Account of in the same Chapter, where all that remained to be said of him seems to be thrown together. His Death is related before the Birth of *Esau* and *Jacob*, though it be demonstrable that it happened after it.

upon his Brother *Benjamin* in particular, who could not possibly have known him, to be a Witness to his Father of his Life and Grandeur?  
 (c) *Your Eyes see, and the Eyes of my Brother Benjamin, that it is my Mouth which speaketh unto you. And you shall tell my Father of all my Glory in Egypt, &c.*

There is a farther Reason why *Jacob* cannot be thought to have stayed several Years at *Shelem*. It seems to imply a Breach of his Vow (*Gen. xxviii. 20.*) or at least an unreasonable Delay in performing it; with which we should not charge him without Cause. The *Jews* and others have made the Disgrace of *Dinah* a Divine Judgment upon him for his Neglect; but this is of no Weight; rather indeed a shocking Supposition, considering the Consequences that ensued. Bishop *Patrick* and others appear to have been distressed for a good Excuse for *Jacob's* Delay.

There still remains a Reason yet stronger. We read (*Gen. xxxi. 3.*) that God commanded *Jacob* to return, not only to the Land of his Fathers, but also to his Kindred. After this, we can hardly think that he would make any unnecessary Delays, in returning to his Father *Isaac*: for so he understood the Command; as appears from *Genesis xxxi. 18.*

And if *Jacob*, as seems to be clearly proved, did not reside any considerable Time near *Shelem*, in his Way to his Father, it will follow

(c) *Genesis xlv. 12, 13.*

Dr. *Shaw*, computing the Age of *Benjamin* in the common Way, has the following Observation upon this Passage.

"His appealing, after he had addressed himself to them all, to the single Testimony of *Benjamin*, how superior a Token soever it may be interpreted of *Joseph's* peculiar Regard and Affection for *Benjamin*, yet it could not, in this Light, and upon this Occasion, be of the least Moment or Consequence; nay, it seems rather to have been altogether incongruous and absurd. For *Benjamin* was only a Child, when *Joseph* was sold into *Egypt*; consequently it would have been improper to have called upon him as an Evidence, who could not be capable, at such an Age, of retaining the least Notion or Remembrance of *Joseph's* Person." *Shaw's Travels*, 2 Edit. Page 391.

The Sense which the Doctor, after the Rabbinical Commentators, would affix to the twelfth Verse, is such as I do not choose to transcribe. But, we may take the Words of our Translation in their obvious Meaning, and no Absurdity will follow, if *Benjamin* be allowed to have been eight or nine Years older than these Writers supposed; that is, to have been two and thirty at the Going into *Egypt*, and consequently ten when *Joseph* was sold.

that

that, if *Simeon*, *Levi*, and *Dinab* set out from *Haran* in their Childhood, according to the received Opinion, they were still Children when the Affairs at *Shalem* were transacted, which can by no Means be admitted; and therefore they were grown up when they left *Haran*, and *Jacob* had been there longer than has been hitherto imagined.

## SECTION VII.

LET us now review the whole Argument.

It seems to appear then, 1. that (d) *Jacob* did not marry *Leah* and *Rachel* soon after his coming to *Haran*, as *Bedford* and others suppose; 2. that *Joseph* was not older than *Asher*, *Issachar*, and *Zebulun*, as *Le Clerc* and others say; 3. that *Jacob* was not several Years on his Removal from *Haran* to *Mamre*, as many Chronologers have thought; 4. that the Slaughter at *Shalem* was not posterior to the selling of *Joseph*, (e) as

(d) There is an Opinion on this Subject, which seems to be derived from *Josephus*, and has not wanted it's Patrons among the Moderns; namely, that *Jacob* did not marry *Rachel* till after the End of his second seven Years' Service; which, if it were admitted, would put it beyond Dispute that *Jacob* was more than twenty Years in *Mesopotamia*. For if we allow fourteen Years before *Rachel* was married, who, it is plain from the History, was several Years barren, yet bare *Joseph* at least six Years before *Jacob*'s Return, we must grant that his Stay in *Mesopotamia* exceeded by several Years the supposed Term of twenty.

But I have founded no Argument upon this Interpretation, because it appears to me to be inconsistent with the Words of *Genesis* xxix and xxx. and with the Circumstances of the Story.

A certain late Writer has inadvertently taxed *Le Clerc* with maintaining this Opinion; But both his Paraphrase and Notes speak the direct contrary, and so does his *Chronological Table*.

A Person so ingenuous as the Writer here intended will be glad to see this Piece of Justice done.

(e) The following Remarks, in Confutation of this Opinion, should have been inserted Page 16, after the Words *there to join Isaac*.

"It is likewise plain, from *Genesis* xxxvii. 14. that *Joseph* was sent by his Father out of the Vale of Hebron, or *Mamre*, when seized and sold by his Brethren. Consequently, he was sold after the Transactions at *Shalem* or *Shechem*, which happened on the Way from *Padan-Aram* to *Mamre*. The Date of them is very distinctly fixed to the Time when *Jacob* came from *Padan-Aram*: For thus the Story is introduced, *Genesis* xxxiii. 18. And *Jacob* came to *Shalem*, a City of *Shechem*, which is in the Land of *Canaan*, when he came from *Padan-Aram*; &c. At that Time *Joseph* was but six or seven Years old, whereas he was seventeen when he was sold, as has been shewn already."

*Le Clerc*



*Le Clerc* conjectures; and 5. that the (f) Sons of *Benjamin* and *Pharez* were not born in *Egypt*, as many Interpreters have said. But if all, or most of these Opinions, are not only attended with great Difficulties, but likewise contrary to the plain Words of Scripture, it will seem to follow, 1. that *Jacob* fled to *Haran* sooner than has been hitherto thought, and, 2. that *Judab's* Marriage was prior to *Jacob's* Return to *Canaan*. If this be not granted, I see not how we can avoid leaving the *Sacred History* chargeable with great Improbabilities, if not with Inconsistency. To allow it to be improbable will lessen its Authority: to suppose it inconsistent is to suppose it false. —

But on the Supposition of the proposed Interval of twenty Years, between *Jacob's* fourteen Years' Service and his Agreement with *Laban* after *Joseph's* Birth, which I apprehend to be perfectly consistent with Scripture, all the Events before mentioned will become probable; as from the following Scheme may appear. The Years before Christ, or, more properly, before the Christian Era, are made to agree with Archbishop *Usher*; without inquiring, for the present, whether his Calculation be well or ill founded. The Age of *Jacob* is given for the Reason before assigned, Page 9.

(f) Some Commentators have thought that Part of the ten who are called Sons of *Benjamin*, *Genesis* xlv. 21. were really Grandsons; which seems to be confirmed by *Numbers* xxvi. 40. *Ard* and *Naaman* being there said to be the Sons of *Bela*. But what Difficulty is there in supposing that *Bela* might name his Sons after two of his Brothers? Thus *Shelab* called one of his Sons *Er* (*1 Chron.* iv. 21.) the Name of his eldest Brother, who died without Issue; which seems to have been likewise the Case of *Naaman* and *Ard*, for, unless they were Grandsons, we find no Account of their Posterity in *Numbers* xxvi. The Order which the Sons of *Benjamin* are ranked in (*Genesis* xlv. 21.) does not at all countenance the Opinion of *Naaman's* being a Grandson. But if any think that *Ard* and *be* were really such, it is much more easy to suppose that *Benjamin* was a Grandfather at thirty two or thirty three (for I might have made him thirty three) than at three or four and twenty. For that the ten Sons of *Benjamin* were born before *Jacob* went into *Egypt*, is what cannot be denied, without flatly contradicting the Text.



A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE of the Events mentioned  
in this DISSERTATION.

Before Christ.	Jacob's Age.	
1836	0	<i>Esau</i> and <i>Jacob</i> are born.
1821	15	<i>Abraham</i> dies, aged an hundred and seventy five.
1796	40	<i>Esau</i> marries with the Daughters of <i>Heth</i> .
1791	45	<i>Rachel</i> might be born.
1779	57	<i>Jacob</i> might flee to <i>Haran</i> , and begin to serve for <i>Rachel</i> .
1778	58	<i>Esau</i> might go to <i>Ismael</i> , and marry his Daughter.
1773	63	<i>Ismael</i> dies.
1772	64	<i>Jacob</i> might marry <i>Leab</i> and <i>Rachel</i> .
1771	65	<i>Reuben</i> might be born of <i>Leab</i> .
1770	66	<i>Simeon</i> might be born of <i>Leab</i> .
1769	67	<i>Levi</i> might be born of <i>Leab</i> .
1768	68	<i>Judab</i> might be born of <i>Leab</i> .
—	—	<i>Rachel</i> , not bearing for four Years, might give <i>Bilbab</i> to <i>Jacob</i> .
1767	69	<i>Dan</i> might be born of <i>Bilbab</i> .
1765	71	<i>Naphtali</i> might be born of <i>Bilbab</i> .
—	—	<i>Leab</i> , ceasing to bear for three Years, might give <i>Zilpah</i> to <i>Jacob</i> .
1764	72	<i>Gad</i> might be born of <i>Zilpah</i> .
1762	74	<i>Asher</i> might be born of <i>Zilpah</i> .
1758	78	<i>Reuben</i> , aged thirteen, might find the Mandrakes.
1757	79	<i>Issachar</i> might be born of <i>Leab</i> .
1755	81	<i>Zebulun</i> might be born of <i>Leab</i> .
1754	82	<i>Dinab</i> might be born of <i>Leab</i> .
1750	86	<i>Judab</i> , aged eighteen, might marry <i>Sbuab's</i> Daughter.
1749	87	<i>Er</i> might be born to <i>Judab</i> .
1748	88	<i>Onan</i> might be born to <i>Judab</i> .
1747	89	<i>Shelab</i> might be born to <i>Judab</i> .
1745	91	<i>Joseph</i> is born of <i>Rachel</i> .
1739	97	<i>Jacob</i> leaves <i>Haran</i> , and makes a Stop at <i>Succoth</i> , and again at <i>Shalem</i> .
—	—	<i>Dinab</i> , aged fifteen, might be debauched or ravished by <i>Shechem</i> .
—	—	<i>Simeon</i> and <i>Levi</i> , each above thirty, might attack <i>Shalem</i> or <i>Shechem</i> .
—	—	<i>Jacob</i> might flee, in Consequence of the Massacre, stay some

Before } Jacob's  
Christ. } Age. }

1738	98	some Time at <i>Bethel</i> , and perform his Vow.
—	—	<i>Rachel</i> might bear <i>Benjamin</i> , and die, aged fifty three.
1733	103	<i>Jacob</i> might come to <i>Isaac</i> at <i>Mamre</i> .
1731	105	<i>Beriab</i> , fourth Son of <i>Asber</i> , might be born to him in his thirtieth Year.
1730	106	<i>Er</i> , aged eighteen, might marry <i>Thamar</i> , and die.
1728	108	<i>Onan</i> , aged eighteen, might marry <i>Thamar</i> , and die.
1727	109	<i>Joseph</i> is sold by his Brethren, aged seventeen.
—	—	<i>Shelab</i> being twenty, <i>Thamar</i> might resent the Delay of his Marriage.
1726	110	<i>Thamar's</i> Incest with <i>Judab</i> might happen.
1716	120	<i>Pharez</i> and <i>Zarab</i> might be born of <i>Thamar</i> .
1715	121	<i>Isaac</i> dies, aged an hundred and eighty.
1714	122	<i>Joseph</i> is made Governor of <i>Egypt</i> , aged thirty.
1713	123	The seven Years of <i>Plenty</i> begin.
1711	125	<i>Beriab</i> , aged twenty, might marry.
1709	127	<i>Heber</i> might be born to <i>Beriab</i> .
1708	128	<i>Malchiel</i> might be born to <i>Beriab</i> .
1707	129	<i>Pharez</i> , aged eighteen, might marry.
—	—	The seven Years of <i>Famine</i> begin.
1706	130	<i>Hezron</i> might be born to <i>Pharez</i> .
—	—	<i>Hamul</i> might be born to <i>Pharez</i> .
—	—	<i>Benjamin</i> , aged thirty two, might be Father of ten Sons.
—	—	<i>Jacob</i> goes into <i>Egypt</i> , aged an hundred and thirty.
1689	147	<i>Jacob</i> dies, aged an hundred and forty seven.

To this Method of settling the Chronology of the Events above specified I am not aware of any material Objection, nor have I knowingly omitted any Circumstance, which ought to be taken into Consideration. At the same Time, I am very sensible that such Circumstances may have escaped my best Attention, and am far from thinking that I have been able to make a complete and perfect Disquisition. Nothing more than an *Essay* was intended, and That is now humbly submitted to the Censure of more competent Judges. My utmost Wish is satisfied, if any Hints, here thrown out, are of Use to Them, who have greater Ability, Leisure, and Opportunity for such Inquiries.

T H E E N D.

